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## ***DC Fire & EMS Patient Care Policies: EMS Observer/Ride-Along Policy***

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### ***I. Observer/Ride-Alongs***

1. As a municipal agency, members of the public have the right to observe us in the performance of our duties on a first person basis. However, this right may only be exercised in an organized and consistent fashion. We do not discriminate on who may “ride-along” on the basis of gender, age, race, religion or sexual orientation.
2. All ride-alongs (observers) must first be approved by the EMS Deputy Chief’s Office and have a signed waiver (see sample on N1.4) on file with the staffing specialist prior to being granted the opportunity to observe.
3. If approved at the Deputy Chief’s level, all of the documentation associated with the waiver should be forwarded to the EMS Medical Director for final approval
4. Once approved, the EMS Deputy Chief will assign the observer to a unit and crew.
5. Should a crew assume duty and find an observer is present, requesting to ride, the crew must verify approval as well as verify that a signed liability waiver is on file with the Staffing Specialist.
6. The EMSB does retain the right to refuse a previously approved ride-along request for any reason, other than those stated in the non-discrimination statement, at the discretion of an EMS Supervisor or other high ranking official. Reasonable effort will be made to accommodate specific unit/crew requests.
7. The observer will receive an informational packet that will provide a brief overview of the Department’s rules and regulations regarding the ride-along. Included in this packet will be a questionnaire that will solicit feedback regarding the observer’s experience.

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### ***I. Observer/Ride-Alongs (continued)***

8. Observers will be issued a vest along with the information packet that will identify them as guests of the department. This vest must be worn at all times while on an emergency response.  
***Observers must not wear clothing that associates them with the Department, including T-shirts with the Department logo displayed.***
9. The vest will be returned along with the survey at the conclusion of the observation period.
10. At no time will observers be permitted to take pictures, use a video camera or any other audio-visual recording device while on the scene of an incident. Requests for media ride-alongs will be dealt with separately through the Public Information Office (PIO).
11. The privilege for observers to ride-along may be extended no more than once every three months.

### ***II. Student Ride-Alongs***

1. The Department may be called upon to assist in the training of area EMT and Paramedic students. This is due to our heavy call volume and broad range of experience. These requests should be made through the EMS Deputy Chief's Office and approved by the Medical Director.
2. ***All of the policies as established in the above section will be applicable to student ride-alongs.***
3. The student should be wearing a uniform that identifies them as a student in a recognized educational program.

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### ***II. Student Ride-Alongs (continued)***

4. Students requesting to practice pre-hospital skills will be allowed to do so *only* under the following conditions;
  - A. The student is registered in a recognized educational program in good standing, with documentation from their instructor verifying their status.
  - B. The student presents to the crew the approved “Authorization to Perform Clinical Skills” form signed by the Medical Director
  - C. Their instructor will verify that appropriate training has been completed for the skills that the student is requesting to practice.
  - D. As part of the agreement it should be noted that a student might be denied the right to practice any skill, by either crew member, at any time, during their ride-along experience.



**Note Well:** *Refusal of the observer to follow any directive from a crew member will automatically end the ride-along experience and the observer/student will be asked to step down.*

*Should such a situation arise, the observer will be transported to the nearest safe location such as a firehouse or hospital. The appropriate supervisor will be notified and will pick-up and return the observer to the location where the observer first interfaced with the crew.*

*The supervisor will report the name of the observer and the reason why she/he was asked to step down to the EMS Deputy's office.*

*The crew members may be directed to write a special report describing the circumstances surrounding the incident.*

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## **DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FIRE & EMS DEPARTMENT Liability Waiver**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ do hereby assume any and all risk and liability for any and all damage, losses, personal injuries or death which I might suffer or sustain while in a motor vehicle, including emergency apparatus, or in any building, property or premises owned or operated by the Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department (Department) or the District of Columbia Government ("District of Columbia"). Furthermore, I hereby release, defend, indemnify and hold harmless the Department, the District of Columbia Government of the District of Columbia, and all agents or employees, from any and all claims for losses, damages, expenses, personal injuries or death which might be sustained in connection with my presence in a Department motor vehicle or in any building or on any property or premises owned or operated by the Department or the District of Columbia.

This release expires on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ in the year of \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
City, State

\_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone Number

The above agreement is approved for the District of Columbia Government and the Fire and Emergency Services Department by

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title

Distribution: 1 copy to Individual  
1 copy to the Public Information Officer

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sample